

**Introduced by Committee on Elections, Reapportionment and
Constitutional Amendments (Senators Bowen (Chair), Battin,
Murray, Poochigian, and Romero)**

February 10, 2006

An act to amend Section 15101 of the Elections Code, relating to absentee ballots.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1276, as introduced, Committee on Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments. Absentee ballots: processing.

Existing law specifies the procedures for processing absentee ballot return envelopes during the 29-day period before any election and authorizes any jurisdiction having the necessary computer capability to start processing absentee ballots on the 7th day prior to the election.

This bill would revise this authorization to apply to the 7th business day prior to the election.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 15101 of the Elections Code is
2 amended to read:
3 15101. (a) Any jurisdiction in which absentee ballots are cast
4 may begin to process absentee ballot return envelopes beginning
5 29 days before the election. Processing absentee ballot return
6 envelopes may include verifying the voter's signature on the
7 absentee ballot return envelope and updating voter history
8 records.

- 1 (b) Any jurisdiction having the necessary computer capability
2 may start to process absentee ballots on the seventh *business* day
3 prior to the election. Processing absentee ballots includes
4 opening absentee ballot return envelopes, removing ballots,
5 duplicating any damaged ballots, and preparing the ballots to be
6 machine read, or machine reading them, but under no
7 circumstances may a vote count be accessed or released until 8
8 p.m. on the day of the election. All other jurisdictions shall start
9 to process absentee ballots at 5 p.m. on the day before the
10 election.
- 11 (c) Results of any absentee ballot tabulation or count shall not
12 be released prior to the close of the polls on the day of the
13 election.